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**REGIONAL POLICY PLANNING AND ECONOMIC
ANALYSIS IN GREAT BRITAIN**

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REGIONAL POLICY PLANNING AND ECONOMIC ANALYSIS
IN GREAT BRITAIN

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INTRODUCTION

This bibliography is intended to give the feel of the complex succession of legislation which has comprised British regional policy over the past forty years. I have therefore felt it necessary to incorporate an opening summary of the major thrusts in policy over the years as a preface to a select bibliography of the legislation and other government publications.

Government intervention has in Britain become a somewhat institutionalized way of dealing with regional problems. And the British love of pragmatism has often resulted in hasty action of which all the consequences were not foreseen. This perhaps explains why regional economic analysis has been comparatively undeveloped until lately. With the shift in emphasis from the ad-hoc responses to employment-based regional crises, to a system of regional planning to maximize the spatial use of scarce resources, the need for a much greater understanding of the spatial operation of the economy arose. Many of the analytical techniques were borrowed from elsewhere--notably Germany and the USA, and the bibliography of references to regional economics and regional analysis includes basic texts and key articles on important techniques of analysis. It would obviously be beyond the scope of this bibliography to include a comprehensive set of foreign references; in any case the annotation includes a note of the bibliographic strengths of these major references.

I have preferred to keep the major division to Regional Policy, followed by comments and critiques on various aspects of it, and Regional Economics and Analysis. This avoids the considerable problem of classification of sub-headings and cross-references. Proposed reform of local government has however, been accorded a separate section and its impact on future regional planning will be considerable, if adopted. Annotation attempts to indicate the relationship of the reference to the principal analytical techniques. Occasionally I have included references without annotation. This is either because the title was self-explanatory or because the reference was not available at Urbana--in this case it has been taken on trust.

Any comments on the bibliography would be greatly welcomed since this would lead to improvements in any reissue.

Finally, my thanks to Mrs. Mary Vance, librarian of the City Planning and Landscape Architecture Library for her help and encouragement to me in writing this addition to the series of planning bibliographies, and to her staff for tolerance of my well-nigh illegible manuscript.

MKM, June 1970, Urbana, Illinois.

A SUMMARY OF REGIONAL PROBLEMS AND POLICY RESPONSES

The problem of regional disparities in the share of national growth is common to many advanced industrial nations. In Britain these problems have long caused concern at national level, as well as in the regions themselves. Britain was the first nation to industrialise intensively, and the pattern of mass population movements away from the land to mushrooming urban centres around raw material sources was repeated throughout Europe and in the United States. The uneven distribution of raw materials disturbed the comparative equilibrium of agriculture-based settlement patterns, though these remained constant in nations of a low level of industrialisation until well into the twentieth century.

In the years following the First World War a world-wide depression greatly reduced the demand for the basic products of the coal-iron-steam technology. Various regions had become overly specialised in coal-mining, iron and steel founding, textiles, railway engineering and shipbuilding, and the sudden erosion of demand for their products resulted in severe unemployment and related social problems. Because of the specialisation few alternative sources of employment were available locally. A further problem was that new industries, which despite the national depression experienced a growth in output, were market rather than resource based, and with a high ratio of value to weight. These, the radio and tele-
communications industries, and motor industry/located in major conurbations such as the Greater London or Birmingham areas. The new industries were in turn far more dependent on externalities such as specialised subcontractors, bankers, brokers and advertising agencies, with which easy contact was necessary as part of their production and marketing processes, and they also created growing opportunities in white collar work. Any

demand for these new products from the depressed areas had to be met in the form of imports from the more prosperous regions, depressing their economies still further through the workings of the regional multiplier.

The first form of Government intervention in the economy in the realm of regional policy was the Industrial Transference Board of 1928, by which retraining centres were set up in the areas hardest hit by the depression in the hope of finding alternative employment for the unemployed in other regions. The scope of this scheme was extremely limited - a total of 70,000 men were retrained between 1929 and 1937, of whom 65,000 were known to have found employment. At the time national employment was running at 21%, with a regional high in Wales of 36.5% of insured population unemployed. These aggregations ignore the fact that in some localities figures in excess of 90% unemployment were recorded at the height of the depression in 1933. The transference scheme could only hope to spread the unemployment slightly more equitably.

This first instance of intervention on behalf of regional problems sought to induce mobility of labour, at a time of low aggregate demand and high national unemployment. The Government also advocated mass migration from Britain to Canada and Australia as another solution to the problem; in this pre-Keynesian era there was no attempt to find means of managing aggregate demand to stimulate economic growth. Further measures introduced in the 1930's included the setting up of Government-sponsored industrial trading estates in order to bring new employment to the depressed areas, but these had little impact before the outbreak of the Second World War brought a resumption of full production and full employment for the national war effort.

Early regional policies had a greater impact over time in colouring the political and social attitudes to regional policy over the subsequent

forty years. The post-War reconstruction was based on a national goal of full employment, and notwithstanding the deepening inflation/recession cycle which set in in the late 1950's, the labour situation has been one of shortage rather than surplus. However, any moves to stimulate mobility of labour, both spatially and in an employability context, have been viewed as a return to the policy of the 1930's, although even the worst regional unemployment levels have been a fraction of pre-war levels. The pre-war experience was also responsible for the establishment of unemployment levels as the principal, and often sole arbiters of implementation and formulation of regional policies. It is only in the past decade that consideration has been given to factors such as disposition of disposable personal and regional incomes, productivity of labour, participation rates in the labour force.

The relationship between the regional and national economies was not examined in any detail until the late 1950's, when dissatisfaction with the annual growth of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and the growing agitation for measures to alleviate the fact that the problem regions bore the brunt of deflationary measures in the late 1950's Stop/Go cycles. Initial moves were most concerned with the national picture, but increasing emphasis was given to the planning of optimum use of resources in the regions as an essential factor to improvement of national growth. This was a new viewpoint, compared with the previous concern of compensating for compounded defects produced by the workings of the market mechanism over time and space. The establishment of Regional Boards and Councils by the Labour Government in 1964, as an essential part of the National Plan seemed to indicate the new mood in regional planning.

The late 1960's with a continued uncertainty of the direction and rate of growth in the national economy revealed the dichotomy of regional thought. On the one hand there is the continued concern for employment levels at a local scale, and local solutions, as a continuation of pre-War thought. The solution is seen as a "work to the workers" policy, often strictly followed through in areas which do not seem to have good prospects for recovery based on purely economic considerations, by the building of advance factories and the use of substantial loans and grants to induce location of industry. On the other hand is the system of Boards and Councils whose role is to assess the best use of regional resources, and whose recommendations may advocate policies of stimulating intra-regional mobility in order to steer growth to those areas where it will have the maximum economic impact for their region. This situation has been considerably modified by the 1966 Industrial Development Act which has scheduled much larger Development Areas than previously. The representation of local areas in Parliament by Members concerned with achieving an optimum share of resources for their constituencies still continues to give local considerations priority in Parliament. Since the Regional Boards and Councils are purely advisory and without executive powers, there if often no satisfactory means of resolving these conflicts as far as priorities at a regional level are concerned.

Discriminatory policy has been highly developed under the present Labour Government from the Industrial Certificate procedure introduced shortly after the war. There are three major components.

The first type of assistance is that given to firms which are expanding or establishing new undertakings which provide extra employment, and takes the form of building grants, general purpose loans and grants

and the provision of advance factories. This assistance is administered under the Local Employment Acts, originally through the Board of Trade, but from late 1969 by the Ministry of Technology. It now has declined in importance, although extra measures for a series of Special Development Areas where there are high and persistent unemployment levels are likely to increase expenditure from the present level of 50 million pounds per annum. This is probably the most socially weighted of the present regional policies, its aim being to create employment, and encourage labour intensive practices and labour hoarding to continue at a time when productivity and industrial competitiveness is high on the objective list of the Ministry of Technology and the Industrial Reconstruction Commission. It is also the most strictly applied of the "work to the workers" policies, though the broader definition of Development Areas adopted in 1966 is a safeguard against ignoring the cost factors in location.

Investment grants are part of a general move towards making industry more competitive. The differentiation in rates for Development Areas costs 70 million pounds per year. A conflict with the employment assistance is immediately apparent, since this policy tends to encourage the growth of capital intensive industry and productivity, freeing reserves of labour for other industries. The extra premium for the development areas is therefore a greater promoter of redundancy and retraining problems in the Development Areas which have a greater propensity for labour surplus, than in the rest of the nation where there is a greater propensity towards labour shortages. Since large scale migrations of labour away from the Development Areas are officially frowned upon, this measure could actually create unemployment. The existence of policies with conflicting objectives also gives an opportunity for the industrialist to

assess whether his firm will get more from the Government by stressing either the labour or capital side of assistance, in which case benefit to the regional economy will be a secondary consideration.

The regional employment premium was introduced in September 1967. The idea is based on a payroll tax levied on all employers in the nation, a portion of which is refunded to employers in the manufacturing industries on the theory that they are contributing to exports. Manufacturing employers in the Development Areas in addition receive an extra weekly premium. The advantages in costs therefore are likely to accrue to the more labour-intensive industries, which may again encourage labour hoarding. The fact that the premium when first introduced was applicable to manufacturing industries only raised protests in the Development Areas in the Scottish Highlands and South West England, whose economies were heavily dependent upon tourism, traditionally defined as a service or non-exporting industry. Consideration of income flows would have immediately revealed that the net effect of income from another region being spent upon services in the region under consideration, is identical to manufacturing and exporting a product which is then paid for by income from another region.

The scale of economic assistance to the Development Areas has increased greatly over the past six years. The present level of assistance is about 300 million pounds. In addition to direct financial assistance, controls of industry and office development in the South East and West Midlands through the refusal of Industrial Development Certificates. There is evidence that the proportion of all Industrial Development Certificates issued to the Development Areas has been rising; in 1967 the proportion was 33%, in 1968 36%. There is unfortunately no way of

ascertaining whether industries whose IDC's were refused to the South East and West Midlands subsequently located in Development Areas, or whether the measure had an inhibiting effect on national growth. Unless detailed analysis of this kind is carried out in the near future, the increasing sums being spent on regional policies may be misapplied in certain aspects. The basic conflicts noted in the simple evaluation of the policy above indicate that this may be happening, although this is not to suggest that regional policy could or should be uniform in its treatment of problems. The years during which regional policy was almost entirely vested in IDC procedure were notable for a re-appearance of regional disparities. The present policy range should be flexible enough to address itself to existing problems, but it is difficult to see the seeds of a more positive approach in the present policy structure, which conflicts with the present structure of the Planning Boards.

The formidable technical difficulties of regional planning are a relatively new phenomenon in most nations where there is a modified market economy, with important sectors of industry under private control. Britain has two advantages which should enable her to achieve a viable system of regional planning. The first is that the basic utility, transport and heavy industries are state controlled and a policy of planned expansion in these sectors should make influence of the private sectors easier than where these industries are privately controlled. Planned growth of the nationalised industries was one of the main points in the National Plan of 1965. This move was followed by conflicts between the industries concerned, notably the fuel and power sector, and hopes of influencing the private sector came to nothing. The second advantage is the long record of intervention in the form of regional policies.

There are few means of evaluating those policies to find which are most effective answers to regional problems. The Government has been conscious of the technical difficulties of regional planning as well as the political problems and in 1965 the National Institute for Social and Economic Research was commissioned to build up a theoretical and empirical framework for the analysis of regional economic development and the consideration of regional policy in the United Kingdom especially in relation to problems of national economic development. This study has not yet been published, but the appointment of a Minister of State for Regional Planning in September 1969 indicates the priority which regional planning has assumed during the past six years. If agreement can be reached on appropriate means of devolution of power to Provincial governments, a complete system of regional planning and policy making may replace the present fragmentary system in the 1970's.

British regional policy presents one way of looking at regional problems, and it should be questioned, whether, in the light of the increased allocation of resources into regional measures, and the continued existence of regional problems, as indicated by high levels of unemployment (these are the figures most widely used in Britain; other statistical measures have not been developed into anything like this detail) the policies are capable of achieving their sought ends, or whether they represent a misallocation of resources.

"In Britain, it is probably fair to say, regional policy has moved too far ahead of regional science for all of its components to be sound and consistent with its objectives .."(B.J. McCormick, foreword to H. Richardson, Elements of Regional Economics, 1969.)

"It is contended that ... these policies have, almost without exception been carried out in face of totally inadequate statistical information about many aspects of the problems which they set out to solve and with no clear impression of their probable impact upon the regions in which they have been applied". (P.E. Lloyd and P. Dicken, "The Data Bank in Regional Studies of Industry", Town Planning, January 1968.

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